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4 May 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EDT)

[Political Developments in South Vietnam: Buddhist notions about the role of the forthcoming elected constituent assembly continue to foreshadow possible conflicts with the Ky government.]

[Thich Thien Minh and lay Buddhist leader Tran Quang Thuan, both close to Tri Quang, have reiterated to US embassy officers their view that the assembly should act as an interim legislature and appoint an interim government in addition to its duties of drafting a constitution.]

[Premier Ky and the military Directorate apparently intend to retain full government authority until a constitution has been adopted. Ky, however, has raised the possibility that the assembly might evolve into a legislature under the Directorate.]

[Thien Minh indicated that the Buddhist Institute would be represented on the committee to be convened shortly to draft an electoral law. With regard to the elections themselves, he said that there would be no Buddhist candidates as such, but that local Buddhist committees would support the "best candidate," whatever his religious or party affiliation. This tactic should allow the Buddhists to exert maximum influence with little direct responsibility, and at the same time make it difficult for other groups to unite against them.]

[Premier Ky reportedly stated yesterday, on a trip to I Corps, that the government would make every effort to hold the constituent assembly election by October. Ky's indirect suggestion that the government might not meet the five-month deadline promised in its 14 April decree could provide the Buddhists an issue with which to challenge the regime's good faith.]

(continued)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: No significant military developments have been reported during the past 24 hours.

Communist Military-Political Developments: The Chinese Communists, in their Foreign Ministry statement on 3 May, have, for the first time, provided specific figures on Soviet military aid sent through China to North Vietnam. The statement asserted that Communist China transported 43,000 tons of Soviet military supplies to North Vietnam in 1965. This figure is close to intelligence estimates of the actual military tonnage moved.

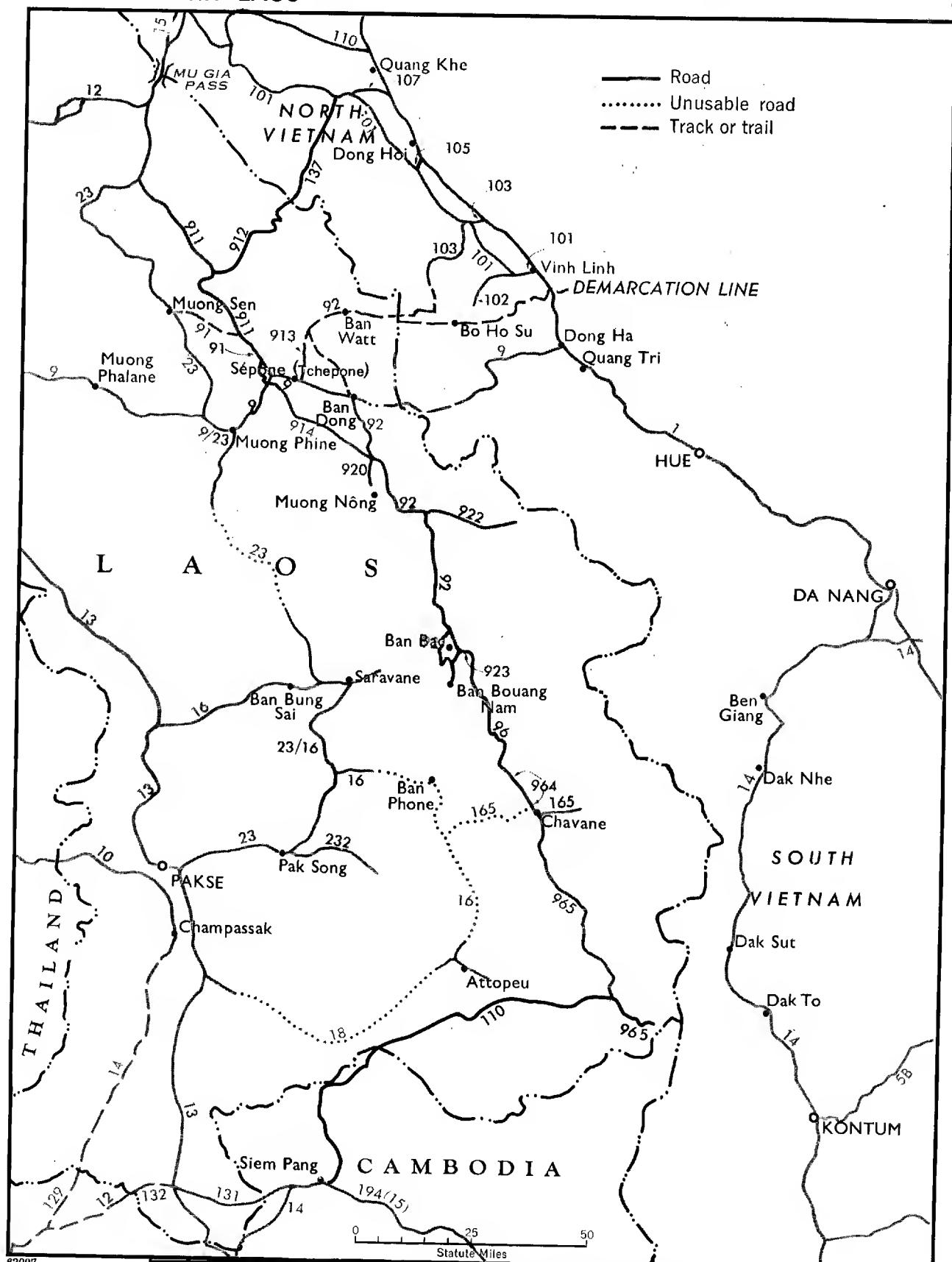
The Chinese statement flatly denied recent Soviet charges that Peking has hampered military shipments, and claimed that everything requested by Hanoi and delivered to China by the Russians has been shipped "with priority, at high speed and free of charge." The statement called Soviet military aid poor in quality and "deplorably meager." It stated that, during the first quarter of 1966, the USSR used only one-third of the 1,730 rail cars Communist China agreed to make available for military aid deliveries.

Despite Chinese protestations, evidence indicates that Peking has placed onerous restrictions on the overland deliveries. Although the restrictions are unlikely to have limited the quantity or types of weapons supplied by the USSR to North Vietnam, they have slowed down the pace of deliveries.

This violent new statement by the Chinese betrays Peking's discomfiture over the effectiveness of the recent Soviet charges. It probably also reflects Peking's sensitivity to ^{USSR's} success in its call for "unity" at the 23rd CPSU congress in March.

(continued)

SOUTHEASTERN LAOS



North Vietnamese Traffic Through Laos: The Communists appear to be moving substantial amounts of supplies along two newly completed roads in the Laos panhandle.

Friendly observers positioned near Route 912, the new road linking Route 101 in North Vietnam with Route 911 in Laos, counted 86 trucks moving into Laos during the period 16-22 April. This rapid exploitation of the new route suggests that the Communists are anxious to replenish their stockpiles in the Laos - South Vietnam border area prior to the onset of the rainy season.

Farther south, friendly guerrillas southeast of Attopeu have reported considerable traffic along Route 110, the so-called "Sihanouk Trail," leading from northeast Cambodia toward the South Vietnamese border. In late March only sporadic truck activity was noted but by mid-April convoys containing as many as 30 trucks were reported moving along the road.

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UK-Rhodesia-Zambia: [The UK has asked Zambia to apply further economic sanctions against Rhodesia.]

[In talks with President Kaunda last weekend, Britain's troubleshooter for Africa, Malcolm MacDonald, expressed London's hope that Zambia would cut imports from Rhodesia in half by the end of May, and cut all economic ties by the end of June. MacDonald indicated that London envisions exceptions for Zambian imports of coal, coke, and electric power, as well as the use of the Rhodesian railway to export copper. He told Kaunda that the Ian Smith regime is beginning to feel the pinch of the sanctions program and that Zambia's actions would spur Rhodesia's capitulation.]

[Zambian contingency planners have advised the cabinet that the country will not be prepared for a total rupture with Rhodesia before mid-July at the earliest. Meanwhile, they are studying the possibility of prohibiting various nonessential imports from Rhodesia.]

[Zambia's inability to develop power sources and copper transport independent of Rhodesia has caused Lusaka heretofore to be chary of a complete break. Zambia has insisted as a prerequisite that the UK guarantee a continuing supply of essential goods and services to Zambia or commit itself to Smith's early ouster, by force if necessary. There is no reason to expect Kaunda to drop this proviso, which to date London has been unwilling to accept.]

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USSR: The prospects for the Soviet winter wheat crop appear highly favorable.

The US agricultural attaché, who is now touring the growing areas, attributes this development to a generally mild winter, an early spring, and extremely good soil-moisture conditions in the areas thus far visited.

The USSR's winter wheat crop accounts for only about 40 percent of the total wheat harvest, but it was the good winter wheat harvest last year that partially made up for the decline that ensued in the spring wheat crop, thus preventing the total wheat crop from dropping to the disastrous 1963 level.

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***Czechoslovakia:** A May Day demonstration in Prague illustrates that the regime has again underestimated the discontent of Czech youth and overestimated its ability to dictate the forms of protest which are permissible.

Truncheon-swinging police dispersed a crowd of some 300 youths and an equal number of onlookers who demonstrated against the regime during the evening of 1 May. The party daily reported on 3 May that "a group of rioters" had been arrested.

Such youth demonstrations were standard fare for May Day evenings from 1962 until 1965, when the regime moved to prevent them by lifting its ban against the traditional student Majales Festival. This festival had been forbidden after 1956 because of the antiregime character it assumed that year. Resumption of the festival on May Day last year deterred the students from rioting, but antiregime slogans were paraded. In addition, over the protests of party officials, US beatnik poet Alan Ginsberg was crowned king of the festival. He was subsequently expelled from the country.

The regime is seeking to limit popular attention and attendance at the Majales Festival this year by moving it from May Day to 15 May. More antiregime slogans are likely to appear at the forthcoming festival, however, no matter what punitive action is taken against the May Day demonstrators.

[* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State or of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.]

NOTES

Jordan-Israel: King Husayn told a US Embassy official on 2 May that Jordan would not retaliate "at this time" for the two Israeli border raids on 29-30 April even though he claimed there was heavy pressure from the Jordanian Army and public to "do something." He indicated, however, that Jordan would retaliate the next time Israel raided alleged terrorist bases in Jordan. Despite high Jordanian casualties-- reportedly 11 dead and five wounded--Husayn has backed off again because of Israel's preponderant military strength, but he cannot continue to do so without risking political trouble at home and propaganda assaults on his Arab patriotism from Cairo and other Arab capitals.

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Finland: After several weeks of postelection sparring and negotiation among the political parties, it now appears that President Kekkonen is pressing the Social Democrats to participate in a coalition government with his Center (Agrarian) Party and the Communist-front SKDL. There are reports that Soviet officials in Helsinki also favor a three-party coalition. The Social Democrats, however, remain deeply divided over the question of Communist participation, and therefore a minority Social Democratic cabinet appears the most likely outcome at this stage of the negotiations. The US Embassy in Helsinki notes that a prominent Social Democrat is now in Moscow, probably to obtain first hand Soviet views on this question.

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*Guatemala: Recent bombings in Guatemala City have been attributed to the right-wing National Liberation Movement (MLN).

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The MLN--disgruntled after its poor showing in the 6 March general elections--may hope to postpone the seating of the new congress due for 5 May. Although the MLN claims to have military support for its actions, Chief of Government Peralta has promised a return to constitutionality and probably retains sufficient backing to carry out his pledge.

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